



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOMELESS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO USING LIBRARY COMPUTER TO ENTICE A MINOR FOR SEX

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a man living at the City Union Mission pleaded guilty in federal court today to using a public library's computer to entice a 14-year-old girl for sex. The girl, Graves added, was actually an undercover police officer.

Verdell L. Williams, 39, who was living at the City Union Mission at the time of the offense, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs this afternoon to using a computer to attempt to persuade a minor to engage in illegal sexual activity.

According to Graves, **Williams** used a computer at the Bluford Branch of the Kansas City Public Library to contact a person he believed was a 14-year-old girl through an Internet chat room. **Williams** asked the girl – in reality, a Kansas City, Mo., police officer working undercover – to meet him in person for sex. When **Williams** arrived for the meeting at what he believed was the girl's apartment, he was arrested.

Under federal statutes, **Williams** could be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in federal prison without parole, up to 30 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Katharine Fincham. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow